## Climate Change and Human Health Literature Portal



# The seafood "dilemma"-A way forward

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#### Abstract:

Increasing seafood consumption will improve health and save lives. A study by the Harvard Center for Risk Analysis suggested that if every adult in the United States consumed 8 ounces of salmon per week, each year there would be 20,000 fewer deaths due to heart attack and 8,000 fewer strokes and stroke-related deaths. A Harvard meta-analysis of previous studies also concluded that the benefits of increased seafood consumption outweighed the added risks from contamination by two to three orders of magnitude (Mozaffarian and Rimm 2006). Another recent report from the National Institutes of Medicine (2007) provides further evidence for the numerous benefits associated with eating seafood, but also points out that certain fi sh and shellfish in specific locations can contain a variety of substances that pose health risks to various sub-populations. The nature of our seafood supply is changing. To meet the growing demand for seafood, there are more cultured products available and imports of seafood from foreign sources are increasing. Surveillance of these products is minimal, especially for compounds that are difficult or expensive to monitor. At the same time, risks, or perceptions of risk, are also changing because many coastal areas are subject to habitat degradation and contamination by chemicals and biological agents. People well versed in these issues realize that benefits and risks vary among types and sources of seafood; however, this complexity still results in considerable confusion on the part of the public about which seafood choices are appropriate given various risk factors. This confusion, which we call a "seafood dilemma," is believed to lead to less seafood consumption than is otherwise advisable and consistent with a healthy diet. Working in the field for over three decades, we feel compelled to offer suggestions to assuage this dilemma. In this commentary, we propose that a U.S. nationwide program is needed to analyze and evaluate seafood for beneficial properties, as well as harmful chemicals and pathogens, and to provide standardized and user-friendly information on the quality and safety of our nation's seafood supply. Such information will improve public understanding and confidence in the safety and quality of seafood, which will enhance human health and well being.

Source: <a href="http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/ufsh20/32/5#.VIXXj2OrzSc">http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/ufsh20/32/5#.VIXXj2OrzSc</a>

#### **Resource Description**

#### Exposure: M

weather or climate related pathway by which climate change affects health

Food/Water Quality, Food/Water Quality, Food/Water Security

Food/Water Quality: Biotoxin/Algal Bloom, Biotoxin/Algal Bloom, Chemical, Pathogen

Food/Water Security: Nutritional Quality

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Geographic Feature: M

resource focuses on specific type of geography

Ocean/Coastal

Geographic Location:

resource focuses on specific location

**United States** 

Health Impact: **M** 

specification of health effect or disease related to climate change exposure

Cancer, Cardiovascular Effect, Diabetes/Obesity, Mental Health/Stress, Morbidity/Mortality, Neurological

Effect, Respiratory Effect

Cardiovascular Effect: Heart Attack, Stroke

Mental Health Effect/Stress: Mood Disorder

Respiratory Effect: Asthma

Population of Concern: A focus of content

Population of Concern: M

populations at particular risk or vulnerability to climate change impacts

Children, Pregnant Women

Resource Type: M

format or standard characteristic of resource

Policy/Opinion, Review

Timescale: M

time period studied

Time Scale Unspecified